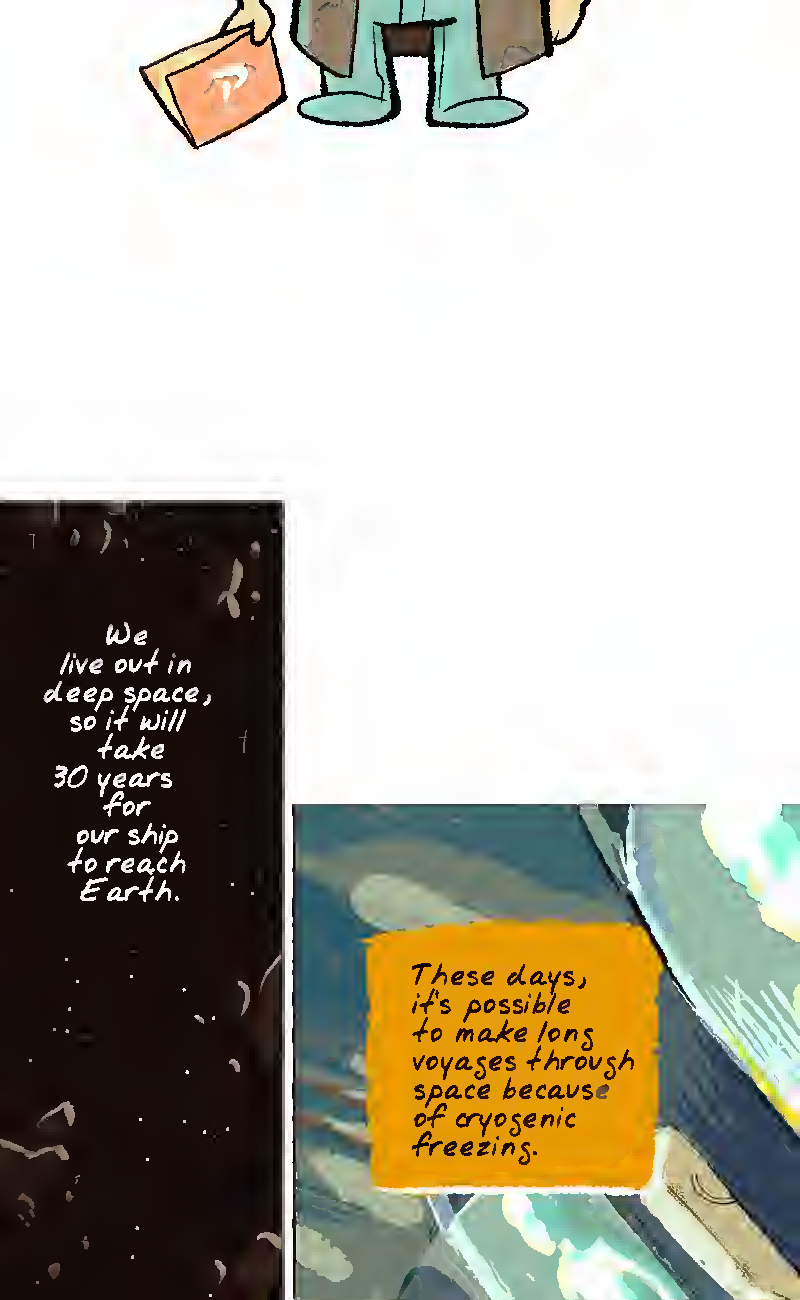
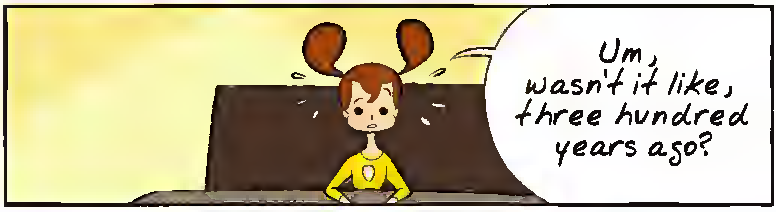
lunch today?
Peanut butter.
You?
This is my other friend, Dylan.
Flavor: Nutty. Just like his sandwich.
Cucumber and roast beef with rosemary and mayonnaise.
No way! You are so lucky!
My mom makes the best lunches.


We live out in deep space, so it will take 30 years for our ship to reach Earth.
These days, it's possible to make long voyages through space because of cryogenic freezing.

What?
I think he might ask you out soon.
Gross. I can't even-- he's like a brother to me, you know?
We grew up together. I can't even imagine going out with him.
You should give him a chance. He's weird, but...
...nice too, you know?
Well, see you later.
Let's hang out tonight and watch a scary movie.
Oh.
Yeah.
Let's do it.
I'm a total scaredy cat Don't tell Jemmah

Amy, we're reviewing yesterday's lesson on the discovery of the Artifact.
Do you remember when the Artifact was discovered?


Um, wasn't it like, three hundred years ago?

of alien origin.

I am leaving my home, and things will never be the same.

Can anyone tell me what's so significant about the Artifact?

It proves aliens exist?

Well, it's not proof, but yes, it's the best evidence we have to indicate we are not alone in the universe.

What is it? A space ship or something?

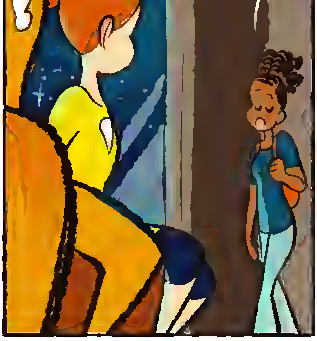
and what they say goes.

My dad returned home that night with a pink folder containing information about his severance package, along with three tickets for the next ship back to Earth-- one for my dad, one for my mom, and one for me.

The Arno has been traveling through space for 296 years now.

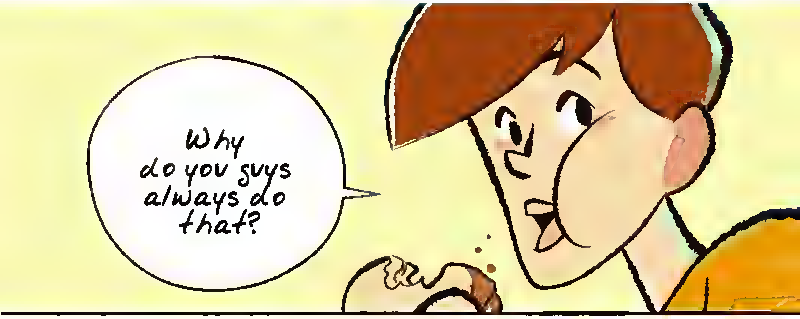
When it reaches the Artifact, the great, great, many greats grandchildren of the original crew sent out on the Arno will be the first people to make contact with an object

My mother is the flavor of mint-- sharp and bright
Off to school with you!
And don't forget your lunch.
My father reminds me of hot chocolate-- sweet and full of gentle warmth.
Bye, Papa. Be careful down in the mine.
Will do, Sweet

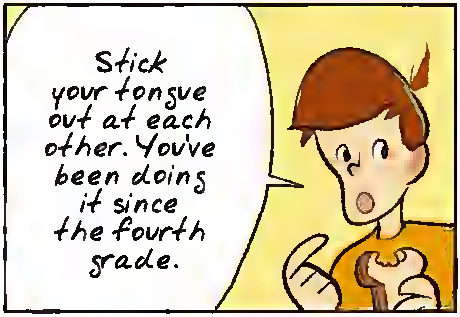


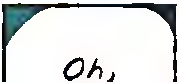
were asleep! I am so sorry!

Oh, don't feel bad. I'm not mad at you or anything.

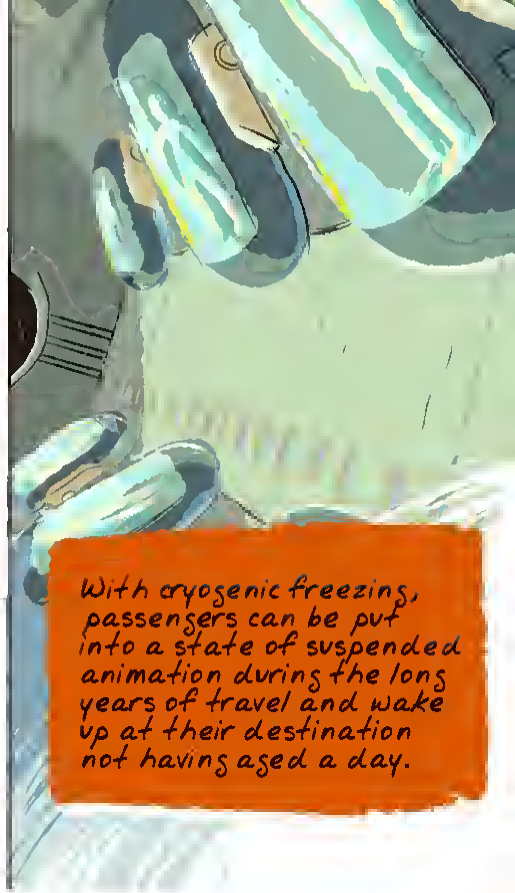

Why do you guys always do that?

Do what?


Stick your tongue out at each other. You've been doing it since the fourth grade.

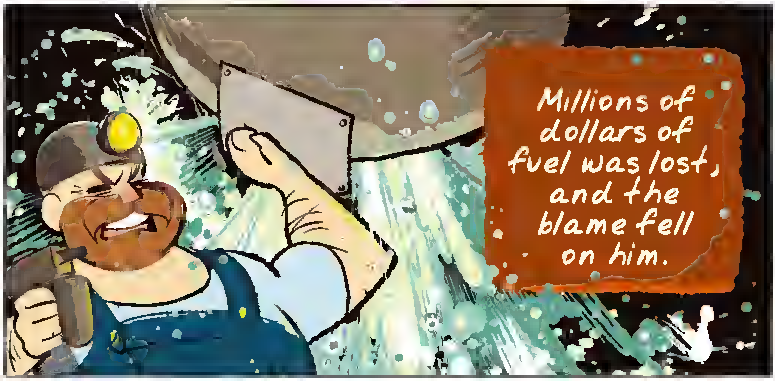

Oh,

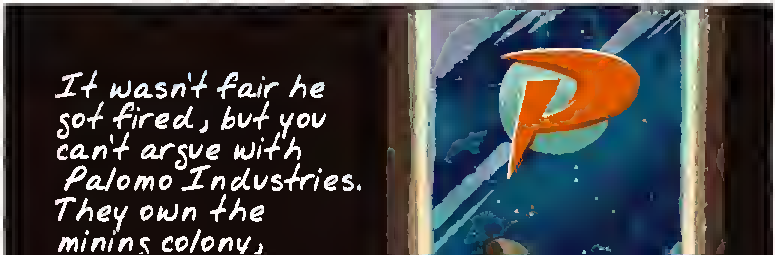
What? It is? Tell


With cryogenic freezing, passengers can be put into a state of suspended animation during the long years of travel and wake up at their destination not having aged a day.

The last thing I see before leaving is Dylan and Jemmah waving goodbye.

My dad had been working down in the main shaft when a fuel line broke.
KOOM!

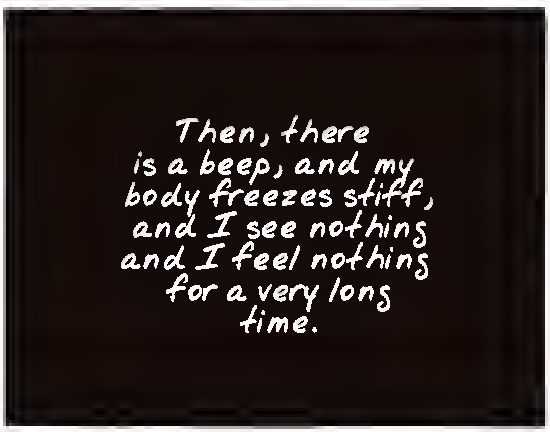

Millions of dollars of fuel was lost, and the blame fell on him.


It wasn't fair he got fired, but you can't argue with Palomo Industries. They own the mining colony,

Okay. First they built a ship called the Arno-- a ship the size of a city.

Then, they stocked it with enough supplies to last hundreds of years.

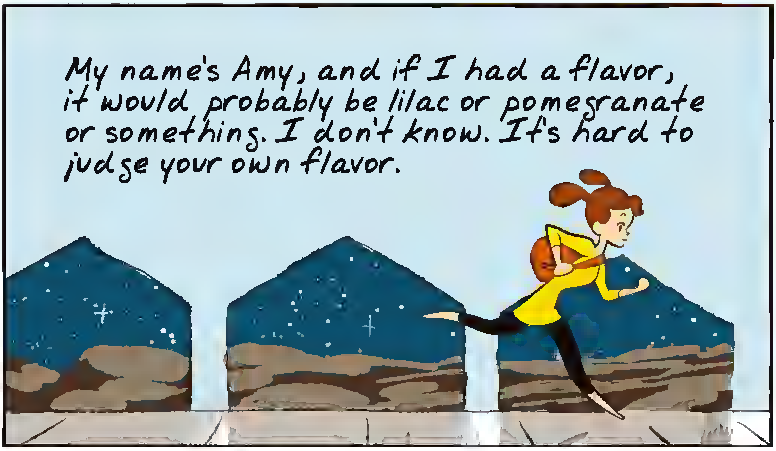
That's right. On screen here we have the first image of the Artifact-- taken by long range telescopes centuries ago.

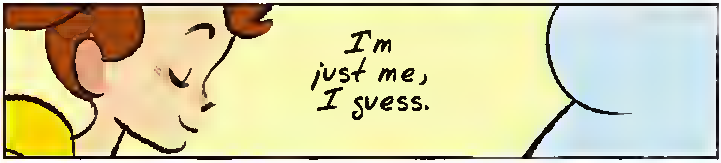

Then, there
is a beep, and my
body freezes stiff,
and I see nothing
and I feel nothing
for a very long
time.

I think Dylan likes you.

People come in flavors.
That's what I think, anyway.

Pea.

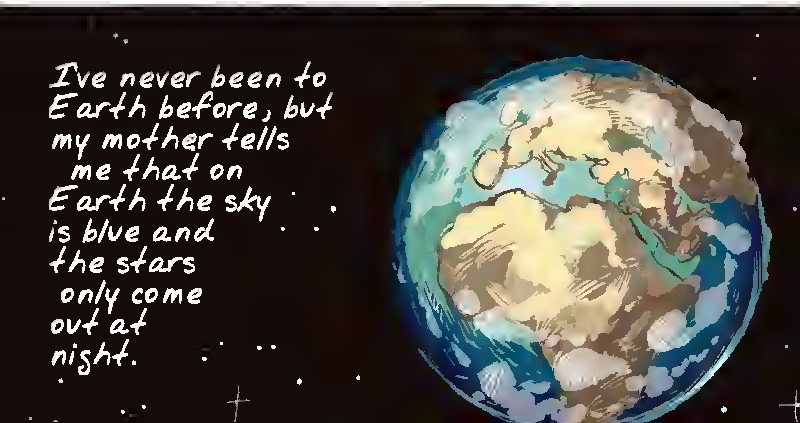

My name's Amy, and if I had a flavor, it would probably be lilac or pomegranate or something. I don't know. It's hard to judge your own flavor.


I'm just me, I guess.

during the long years of travel, and wake up at their destination not having aged a day.

!@#$
*^%!

We mine meridium and send it back to Earth.


I've never been to Earth before, but my mother tells me that on Earth the sky is blue and the stars only come out at night.

It's a small community, but we're like family.

Late again, Amy. That'll be two demerits.
Sorry, Ms. Baker.
Jemmah, my best friend. Flavor: pineapple and jalapeño.
Hey.
Hi.

Give me a bite!
No, you'll slobber all over it.

Having fun, you two?

Jemmah! Did Miss Baker yell at you?
Yeah.

I'm sorry. That sucks.

Why didn't you wake me up?

I didn't know you

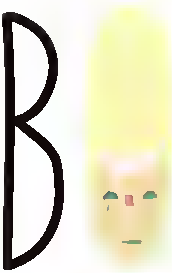
Z

Z

What...
...what happened?

Your dad...

SPACE BOY



by

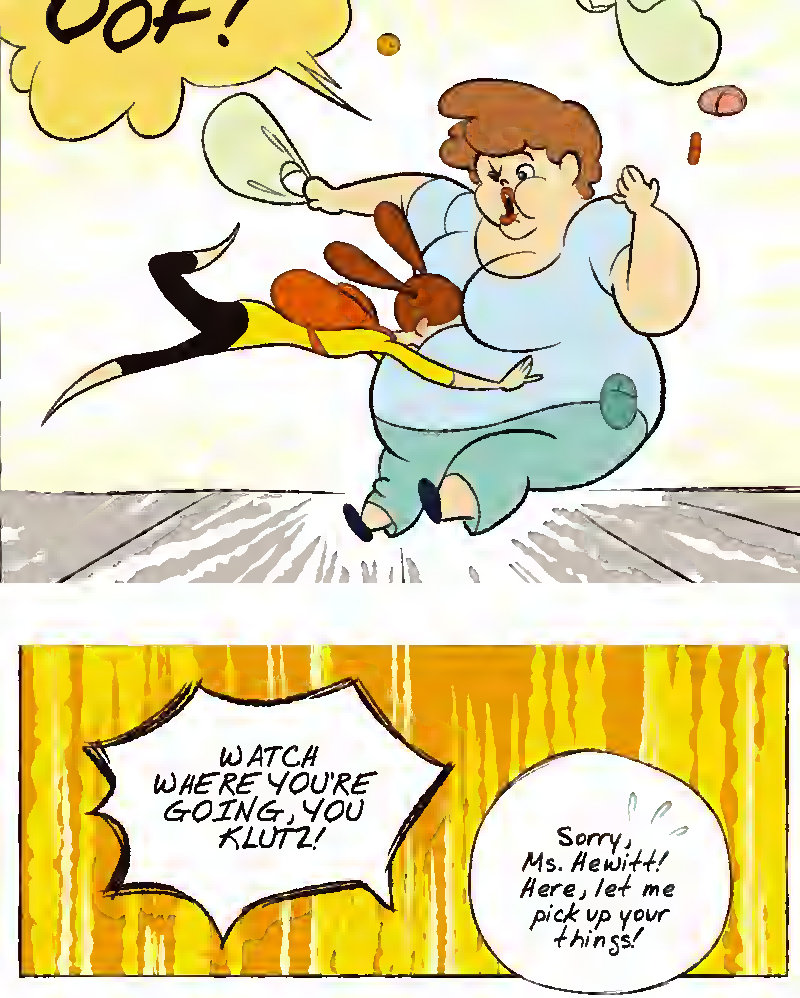
Stephen McCranie
@stephenmccranie

LINE Webtoon
WWW.WEBTOONS.COM

Jemmah sticks her tongue out at me like always.
It's our secret sign, a sign we made up in fourth grade, a sign that means best friends forever.

I step into my cryotube, and I'm barely aware of the technician putting wires on me and strapping me in.

All I can think about is how, when I arrive on Earth, Jemmah will be thirty years older than me.


OOF!
WATCH WHERE YOU'RE GOING, YOU KLUTZ!
Sorry, Ms. Hewitt! Here, let me pick up your things!

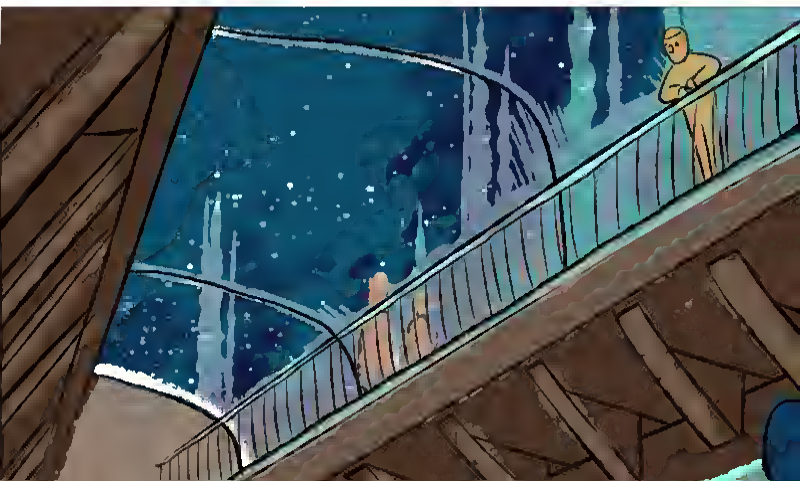
that's a secret.

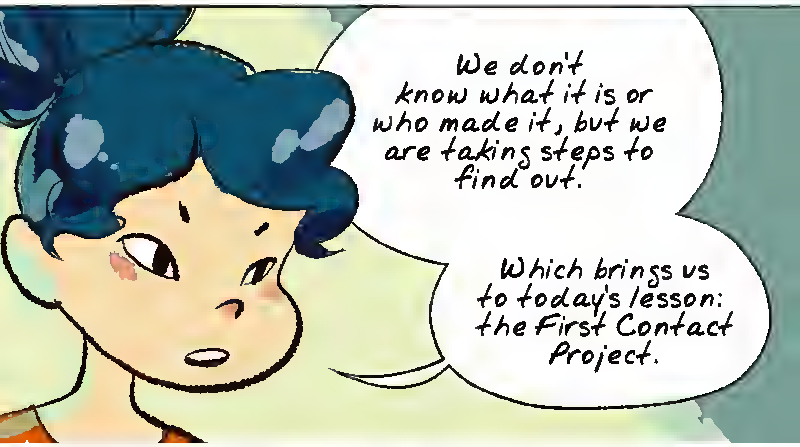
me!

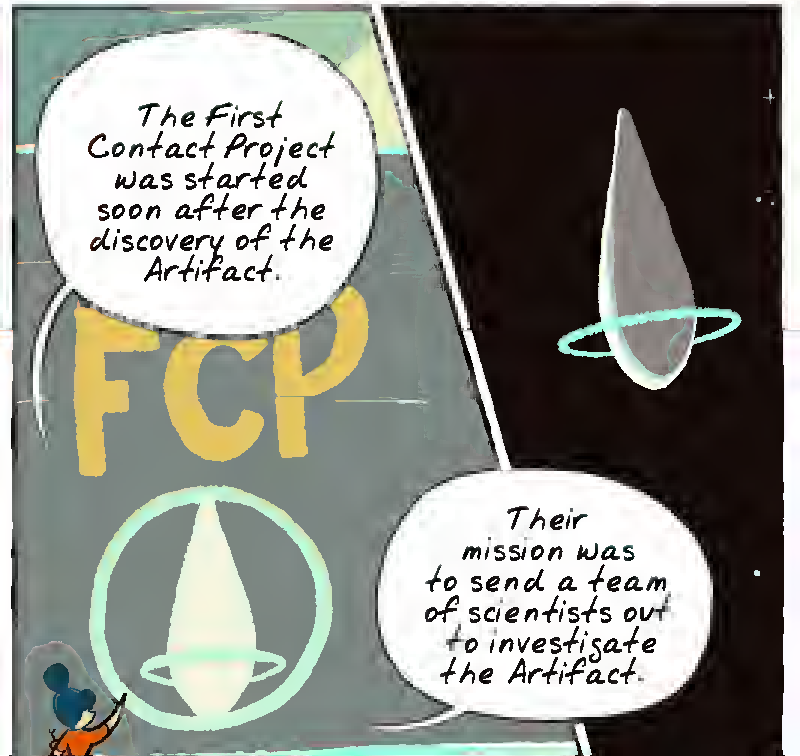
RRRING!

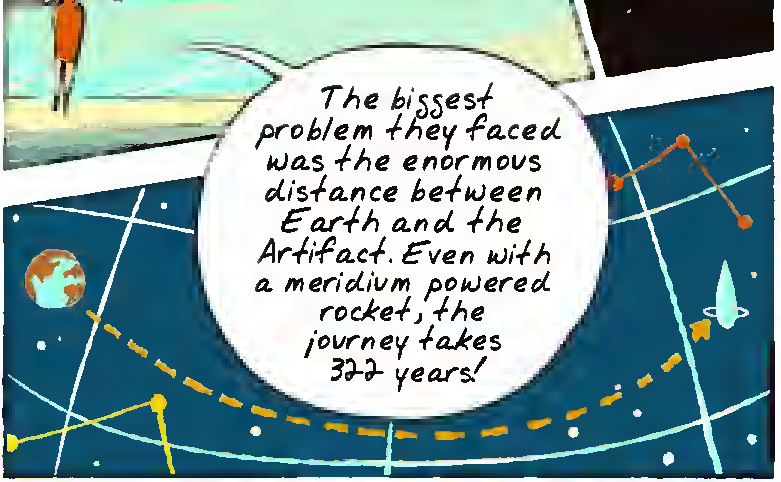
Aw, there's the bell. Too bad. Talk to you later, Dylan!

No fair! This isn't over!

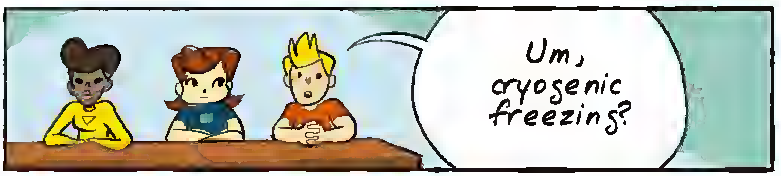


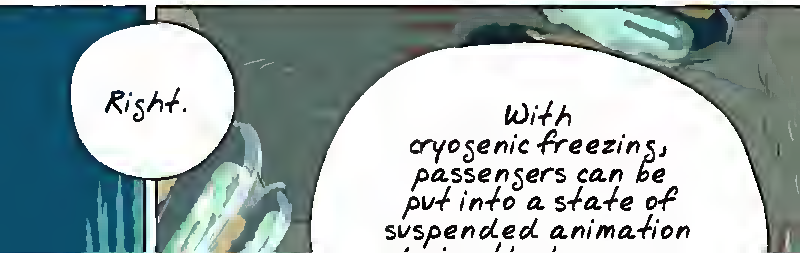

We don't know what it is or who made it, but we are taking steps to find out.
Which brings us to today's lesson: the First Contact Project.

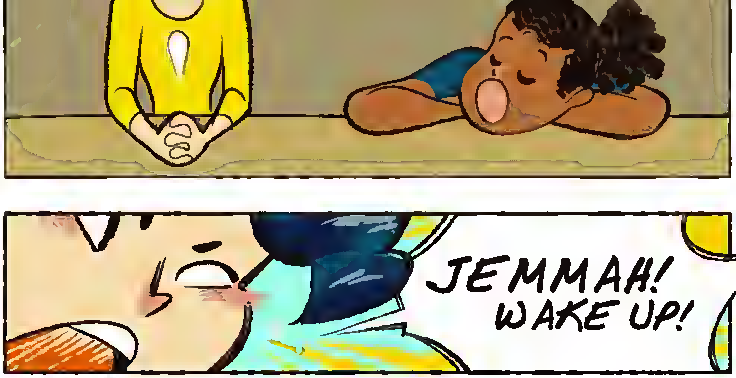

The First Contact Project was started soon after the discovery of the Artifact.
FCP
Their mission was to send a team of scientists out to investigate the Artifact.


The bigsest problem they faced was the enormous distance between Earth and the Artifact. Even with a meridium powered rocket, the journey takes 322 years!

These days, it's possible to make long voyages through space because... what do we have? David?

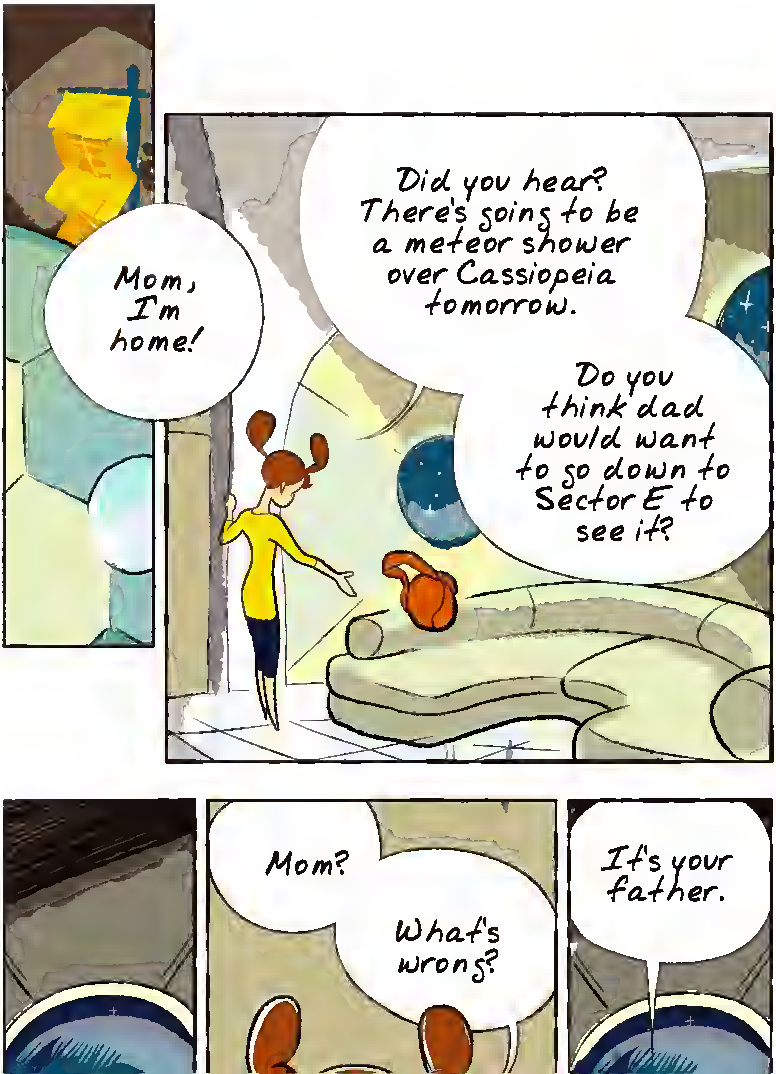

Um, cryogenic freezing?


Right.
With cryogenic freezing, passengers can be put into a state of suspended animation


JEMMAH!
WAKE UP!

What kind of sandwich did you set for

...he
lost his
job.


Mom, I'm home!
Did you hear? There's going to be a meteor shower over Cassiopeia tomorrow.
Do you think dad would want to go down to Sector E to see it?
Mom?
What's wrong?
It's your father.